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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 001066

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/02/2016

TAGS: [PREL](#) [IZ](#) [IR](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: TURKEY/IRAQ: PM JAFARI VISIT TO ANKARA AND  
PROBABLE SADR VISIT

REF: A. BAGHDAD 643

[1](#)B. ANKARA 1020

Classified By: Ambassador Ross Wilson for Reasons 1.4 (b,d).

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Summary  
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[1](#)1. (C) Turkey's Iraq Coordinator Oguz Celikkol reviewed his visit to Baghdad (ref a), described PM Jafari's meetings in Ankara, and discussed Muqtada al-Sadr's probably visit here with Ambassador on March 1. Turmoil surrounding the Samarra bombing dominated both sets of talks, although the two sides also discussed the status of Kirkuk, the opening of additional border crossings, and economic cooperation. He said the PKK was not discussed. Celikkol reported that, having carefully considered U.S. arguments against, Turkey has decided to invite Sadr at a date to be determined. Ambassador urged Turkey to ensure Sadr pays a price for any high-level contacts in Turkey in the form of clear public statements renouncing violence and in favor of Iraqi unity. He also urged Turkey to invite Sunni and Kurdish leaders as well. Celikkol took the point, but noted it would be very difficult to invite Barzani or President Talabani. End Summary.

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Celikkol to Baghdad  
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[1](#)2. (C) Celikkol said his discussions with Iraqi political leaders in Baghdad were dominated by the turmoil surrounding the bombing of the al-Askariya shrine. He reported on IIP leader Tariq al-Hashemi's complaints at the delay in imposing the Baghdad cufew, the use of Shi'a security forces to patrol Sunni neighborhoods, and the detention of numerous Sunnis without hearings. Celikkol said he encouraged Hashemi and other Sunnis not to boycott the government's crisis management activities and to stay in the government formation process. FM Gul raised these Sunni concerns with Jafari during the latter's February 28 visit to Ankara, and Jafari promised remedial measures. Celikkol said his discussions with Iraqi leaders also covered opening additional border gates, Turkey's provision of electrical power to Iraq, and improved economic cooperation.

13. (C) Celikkol said he told President Talabani that the status of Kirkuk cannot be solved by a referendum. He urged instead negotiations leading to a consensus among Arabs, Turkmen and Kurds. Talabani reportedly agreed, said he had talked to Ambassador Khalilzad about the issue, but admitted he had not yet raised it with Barzani. Celikkol said he also met with Barzani and discussed the prospect of improved relations between Turkey and the KRG. Celikkol told us he would visit northern Iraq soon for detailed discussions on a package of simultaneous or phased additional border crossings (including a possible rail link) and deeper economic cooperation. Barzani reportedly agreed to consider additional gates.

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Jafari in Ankara: Border Crossings, SOMO, and Investment  
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14. (C) PM Jafari came to Ankara February 28 for a one-day visit, accompanied by DPM Chalabi and the ministers of electricity and transportation. The delegation called on PM Erdogan, President Sezer, and FM Gul, while the accompanying ministers met separately with their counterparts. Celikkol said Turkish officials stressed to Jafari the need for Iraq to avoid further widening of the rifts created in the aftermath of the Samarra bombing and to forge ahead with a government of national unity. The two sides discussed economic cooperation, including additional border crossings, electricity supply, the possibility of building a natural gas pipeline along the Kirkuk-Yumurtalik oil pipeline, and Turkey's plan to rebuild the Razi hospital in Baghdad. Celikkol said SOMO arrears were also discussed, and he understood a solution to the recurring problem had been

ANKARA 00001066 002 OF 002

found. FM Gul reportedly briefed Jafari on Turkey's plan to manage the Erez Industrial Zone in Gaza and said Turkey would consider a similar project in Iraq, which Jafari welcomed.

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Sadr Coming to Turkey  
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15. (C) Celikkol said he met separately with Transportation Minister Maliki, known to be close to Sadr, to discuss the latter's request to visit Ankara. The GOT's invitation to Sadr stands, Celikkol said, although the timing and the level at which he will be received are not yet decided. Celikkol insisted the GOT has heard our concerns, including from Ambassador Khalilzad, but remains convinced Sadr is an important player who "can be moved" to distance himself from violence and engage in the political process. He added that Sadr had already been received at high levels in other countries in the region, as well as in Russia.

16. (C) Ambassador referred to messages we had given Ankara and that Ambassador Khalilzad had given in Baghdad regarding Sadr. If Turkey decides to go ahead, it should consider two things. First, Turkey should insist Sadr pay for any high-level Turkish attention he receives by making clear and public statements renouncing violence and endorsing the political process. In this regard, Ambassador noted that GOT statements at the time of the February 16 Hamas visit to Ankara were disappointingly vague; Turkey should publicize its messages to Sadr more effectively. Second, Turkey should ensure balance in its contacts with Iraqi groups and consider the message sent by receiving here in short order Jafari and Sadr. The GOT should reach out to Iraqi Sunni and Kurdish leaders as well. Celikkol said that the GOT has invited Sunni leaders Hashemi and Salah Mutlak, as well as a leader of the Kurdish Islamic Union, but would find it politically difficult to invite Talabani or Barzani (in anything other than his role as leader of the KDP), especially in view of the latter's frequent public statements supporting Kurdish independence. Ambassador noted that there are other senior

Iraqi Kurds, including Barham Saleh and FM Zebari. When Celikkol expressed exasperation at our objections to Sadr, given all the other places he had been lately, Ambassador noted that none of those countries is a U.S. treaty ally.

WILSON